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United States Attorney Eastern District of Arkansas

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DRUG TRAFFICKER PLEADS GUILTY TO MURDER AND RECEIVES FOUR CONCURRENT LIFE SENTENCES

Little Rock, Arkansas - Jane W. Duke, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas; Thomas J. Browne, Special Agent in Charge of the Little Rock Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); and Stuart Thomas, Chief, Little Rock Police Department, announced today that Antoine Demetris Baker, a/k/a "B.A.," age 30, pled guilty to a 13-count indictment and was sentenced to four concurrent life terms of imprisonment without the possibility of release. Baker's life sentences were imposed as a result of his involvement in the 2002 murder of Jerry Otis. In addition to the four concurrent life sentences, Baker was also sentenced to 10 years imprisonment on each of 8 counts involving drug-trafficking, firearms, and witness intimidation charges. Each of the 10 year terms ran concurrent with one another and concurrent with the life sentences. Finally, Baker received a consecutive sentence of 5 years imprisonment for use of a firearm in a drug trafficking offense.

Baker's sentences were handed down by United States District Judge Brian S. Miller on what would have been the third day of jury selection in his federal trial. In that proceeding, Baker faced the possibility of death by lethal injection. Prior to commencing court this morning, the parties were informed that United States Attorney General Eric Holder had authorized the withdrawal of the death penalty in exchange for Baker's plea of guilty to all charges and his acceptance of a sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of release. Once that notification was made, Baker's plea was entered and accepted by the Court.

In a third superceding indictment returned July 11, 2007, a federal jury indicted Baker of three counts of being a felon in possession of a firearm; one count of use of a firearm in relation to a drug trafficking crime; two counts related to the distribution of crack cocaine; two counts related to the murder of Jerry Otis with the intent to prevent his attendance and testimony in Baker's trial; two counts of murder with the intent to prevent Otis from communicating to law enforcement officers information relating to the possible commission of a federal offense; and three counts related to Baker's attempt to obstruct, influence or impede Baker's trial through use of intimidation and threats of physical force against witnesses and a law enforcement officer.

According to the superseding indictment, in December 2002, Baker, from his Pulaski County Jail cell, ordered Mario Dednam and Willie Davis, to murder Jerry Otis. Davis arranged a meeting near a park in Little Rock. When Otis arrived at the park, he was shot by Dednam and died two days later. Baker ordered the murder of Otis to prevent him from testifying in court and informing law enforcement officers of Baker's drug activities. Baker, who was the governor of the Gangster Disciples in Southwest Little Rock, was released from jail after Otis' murder until he was arrested by the FBI in 2006. Baker has been in federal custody since that time, but was convicted in November 2006 in Pulaski County Circuit Court of the murder of Bryant Caster. For that murder conviction, Baker received a 55-year sentence in the Arkansas Department of Corrections. While detained pretrial on the federal charges, Baker instructed others to stop cooperating with law enforcement and made threats to kill a Little Rock Police Department detective. Baker will serve his life sentences in the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Dednam was convicted in state court for murder in the first degree of Jerry Otis and received a sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole. Davis was federally indicted along with Baker, pled guilty, and received a sentence of life imprisonment. Davis was slated to offer testimony against Baker in the federal trial.

Duke stated, "I want to commend the hard work and dedication of the officers, agents, and prosecutors who spent many years focused on this result. This case illustrates the positive effect we can have in reducing violent crime through coordinated local, state, and federal efforts. From the inception of this investigation, to today's plea and sentencing, the United States Attorney's Office worked hand-in-hand with our partners in the Little Rock Police Department, the Pulaski County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The resulting state and federal sentences are a true testament to talent and tenacity of the many men and women serving these agencies."

This case was the result of an extensive investigation by the Metrock Task Force, which is comprised of agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and officers with the Little Rock Police Department. Special Agent in Charge Browne noted, "This case is another great example of the effectiveness of the Metrock Task Force. The force multiplier effect of joint law enforcement efforts is particularly effective in gang investigations, and to remove Antoine Baker from the streets of Little Rock for the rest of his life is a great accomplishment for both agencies."

This case was the result of an extensive investigation by the Little Rock Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, The Metrock Task Force and the Little Rock Police Department. The case was prosecuted by Criminal Chief Patrick C. Harris and Assistant United States Attorney Angela Jegley.

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